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*Circular to Local Education Authorities
for Higher Education*

Circular 1432
(19th October, 1933)

All communications should be
addressed to

THE SECRETARY.

BOARD OF EDUCATION,
WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1.

ORGANISATION OF ART INSTRUCTION

1. For some time past the Board have had under consideration the question of the organisation of Art Instruction in England and Wales. While fully recognising the value of much of the work which is being done both in Fine Art and also in Applied Art, experience leads them to think that more systematic co-ordination would enable the schools to increase the effectiveness of their contribution to industrial and commercial development, both locally and nationally, and similarly to raise the standard of instruction in Fine Art.

2. From the point of view of administrative arrangements it will be generally agreed that—

- (a) unnecessary duplication of instruction should be avoided ;
- (b) the work undertaken by individual institutions should, so far as possible, be determined by a scheme applicable to the district as a whole ;
- (c) any gaps in the provision of art instruction for the district should be made good ;
- (d) the best possible teaching, accommodation and equipment should be provided for advanced students ;
- (e) close relations should be established and maintained with local industries.

3. In order to give effect to these principles, the Board consider that in any particular district the efforts of the Authorities should be directed towards organising a system of Art Schools, and of Art classes in other institutions, in close relation with each other and with a central college for the district. In such a system the distinctive function of the College would be to provide the most advanced work in Fine Art and in Industrial Design and Craftsmanship, to pay special attention to the artistic needs of the staple industry or industries of the district, and in some cases to provide courses for intending Art Teachers.

4. While the Board are convinced that this is the right policy to adopt, they realise that the extent to which it can be given immediate effect will vary from district to district. For instance, the degree to which the College can concentrate on advanced work and the arrangements for feeding the College with advanced students from the schools and classes must, for some time at any rate, be influenced by local considerations.

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5. The Board have, however, reached the conclusion that it is not premature to give concrete expression to this policy by a re-classification of Art Institutions and Courses and that this re-classification should be based on the following categories :—

- (a) Art Colleges,
- (b) Art Schools,
- (c) Art Classes.

The third category will be reserved for substantial blocks of Art instruction which for one reason or another are not suitable for recognition as Art Schools. It is probable that some of the blocks of Art instruction which since the issue of the Regulations for Further Education in 1926 have been designated as Art Schools will, under this re-classification, become Art classes. Conversely other blocks which are not at present recognised as Art Schools may be eligible for inclusion in that category.

6. It is of course appreciated that the application of re-classification to Art Institutions in any area must depend on a variety of circumstances. Authorities may rest assured that in dealing with this matter the Board will afford them the fullest opportunity of stating their views and will give those views the most careful consideration.

7. It is evident that such a scheme as has been outlined above could not be effective if confined to the areas of individual Authorities ; in other words, it is as essential to apply the principle of regional organisation to Art instruction as it is to Technical instruction. The most obvious instances of "districts," in the sense in which the term is used in this Circular, are the main industrial and commerical localities, but the Board hope that it may be possible sooner or later to adapt the policy to those portions of England and Wales which are largely rural in character."

8. For every "district" in this sense there should eventually be a Central Art College, but it would not, of course, be possible for the Board merely to recognise as a College the main institution in the city or town forming the natural centre of a district. Before doing so, they would have to satisfy themselves not only that the institution itself was suitable for such recognition, but also that relations between the institution and neighbouring schools, between it and industry, and between the Authority primarily concerned and neighbouring Authorities in regard to transference of students, fees, travelling expenses, etc., were such that there was a reasonable prospect of securing satisfactory organisation of Art education for the district as a whole. In any case, the Board do not propose to recognise more than a limited number of Colleges : to have a College in every area, or even in every small collection of areas, would be to defeat the main object of their policy.

9. The Board suggest that Authorities should consider this matter, and, after consultation among themselves, submit jointly to the Board proposals for recognition of institutions as Colleges. These proposals should set out such details as the type of work, particularly advanced work and instruction in design and craftsmanship related to local industries, which the institution would undertake; the arrangements made or contemplated between the Authorities concerned as to the relations between the College and neighbouring schools and classes; and generally any matters relevant to the points set out in paragraph 2, (a) to (e), above. Such proposals and schemes will receive the Board's sympathetic and careful consideration, but it will be understood from what has been said that many factors have to be taken into account in reaching a decision, and consequently that the refusal of College status to a particular Institution would not involve any reflection on the efficiency and value of its work.

S. H. Pelham

